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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DPG 182

ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS AND RADIO NEWS BRIEFING, TUESDAY,

September 4, 1962, 2:30 EDT

MR. REAP: First, will you cut off all the sound? I have an announcement to make here, but I do not want any sound on this. I will do this again for the sound afterwards.

Following is the text of the U. S. reply to the Soviet note of September 4.

"The charge contained in the Soviet note of September 4"--

Q Slow, please.

A "That a United States aircraft violated Soviet air space August 30 and overflew Soviet territory and territorial waters was investigated immediately upon receipt of the Soviet note. Investigation revealed that an unintentional violation may in fact have taken place. A patrol craft operated by United States Air Force"--

Q A little slower, Joe.

Q "A patrol," eh?

A I am sorry. "A patrol aircraft operated by United States Air Force was in the northern Pacific area"--

Q Was where?

A "Was in the northern Pacific area east of Sakhalin"--S-a-k-h-a-l-i-n--"at about the time specified in the Soviet note. The pilot of the aircraft has reported that he was flying a directed course"--

Q A directed?

A "Directed course well outside"--

Q Well outside?

A "Well outside Soviet territorial limits but encountered severe winds during this night-time flight and may therefore have unintentionally overflowed the southern tip of Sakhalin."

Q The southern what?

Q Tip.

A The southern tip of Sakhalin.

Q I see. Thank you.

A If I may pause, the next phrase here might be confusing. This is the language of the note which John McSweeney, John M. McSweeney--M-e-c-S-w-e-e-n-e-y--will deliver this afternoon: "My Government has instructed me to state that the policy of the United States Government with reference to overflights of Soviet territory has in no way been altered and remains as stated by the President on January 25, 1961. If the pilot of the aircraft in question"--

Q Can you hold it a minute, Joe?

Q . Is that really January 1961? Yes, I guess that's right.

Q Yes.

A January 25, 1961. "If the pilot of the aircraft in question did in fact violate Soviet territory, this act was entirely unintentional and due solely to a navigational error under extremely difficult flying conditions. Precautions intended to prevent such incidents are under review."

That is the end of the note.

Q Joe, are both these sections the same note? I mean, the one you read, was that our reply?

A This was the whole note. What I was trying to do was to explain the first-person part of it.

Q Joe, can you answer some questions?

A I will try to answer some questions--

Q Was the patrol aircraft?

A Hold it a minute. No tape recorders, no sound on this.

Q All right. Was the patrol aircraft involved a U-2?

A All my answers here will have to be background. The answer is yes.

Q What was it doing near Sakhalin?

A No comment.

Q Where was the aircraft based?

A I note in the Soviet note that it says
Japan. I can deny flatly: there are no U-2's in Japan,
and this was announced by Foreign Minister Fujiyama on
July 11, 1960.

Q Is U-2 good for ordinary patrol duty?

A I don't know.

Q You don't want to say where it was based?

A No. I don't know.

Q Was it a regular--wherever it is based
from, is there a regular schedule of these flights?

A I don't know.

Q Do you have the name and address of the
pilot?

A I do not.

Q Well, Joe, even though you can't say what
its mission was, can we assume that it was a peaceful
kind of mission?

A Yes.

Q What was the answer?

A Yes.

Q Is the note being delivered in Moscow?

A Yes.

Q Do we recognize Southern Sakhalin as
Soviet territory?

A I don't want to get into that.

Q Was this plane armed?

A What?

Q Was this plane armed?

A I don't know whether these planes are armed
or not.

Q You said it was on a peaceful mission?

A Yes.

Q So, was it armed?

A I assume that it was not armed.

Q Did it have any cameras, Joe?

A The note points out that this was a night
flight. I don't think that you can take pictures at
night.

Q Did it have any cameras, Joe?

A I don't know.

Q Joe, what agency of the Government--well,
let's see, you called it--

A U. S. Air Force.

Q A U. S. Air Force plane. Is this under
the--I think it is called HASP, H-A-S-P--High Altitude
Sampling something-or-other program of the Defense
Department, is it?

Q What was the question?

A Will you repeat the question?

Q I asked if this flight were part of the so-called HASP, H-A-S-P program, High Altitude Sampling Program, which is operated by Defense Department?

Q High Altitude what?

Q High Altitude Sampling Program?

A No comment.

Q Can you elaborate on the violent weather a little bit?

A Nope.

Q When the note speaks of territorial limits, are you speaking of the 12-mile international waters limit, or a 3-mile international waters, or what?

A I assume that it is the--oh, wait a minute. I am not sure whether it is six or twelve.

Q Is it known how the Soviet Union established the presence of this flight?

A I don't know.

Q Did the flight return?

A Yes.

Q Will there be any more such flights that could be sent off course by such a storm?

A No comment.

Q Was the plane shot at?

A Not that I know of.

Q What were the weather conditions? Is there

anything further on that?

A I only know what the note says.

Q Could the plane have been based in Okinawa? When you said it was not based in Japan--

A I do not know where the plane was based.

Q Are you including Okinawa as part of Japan?

A I do not know where the plane was based.

Q Do you call this an apology?

A This is a reply.

Q Joe, can you state for what purposes U-2's are flying?

A No.

Q Well, Joe, it has been announced that the U-2's that are based in Britain are there to get air samples in connection with this high altitude sampling program.

A That is correct.

Q Can we assume that any planes in the Pacific area would be involved in the sampling of, say, radioactive debris in connection with the Soviet tests, or anything like that?

A I don't know, John.

Q You said this was not an apology but an explanation?

A An explanation in reply to the Soviet note to us.

Q Not an apology?

A No.

Q Will any measures be taken to prevent a recurrence of such incidents as this?

A I think you had better read the last sentence in the note.

Q Let me clarify this a minute. Did you say this was not an apology?

A I don't want to characterize it as anything more than a reply to the Soviet note to us.

Q Are you still on background?

A Everything I say is on background except the note.

Q The Soviet note asked that the people responsible be punished. In view of the circumstances involved in this, is there any thought of punishing the pilot?

A I have nothing more to say on this other than has been said in the note.

Q Has this note been delivered, or will be-- or what is the tense?

A I don't know just precisely where that is.

It is certainly on the way, somewhere between here and the

Foreign Office.

Q One other question--

Q Are U-2's flying for any other agency of the United States Government other than the Air Force?

A I don't know.

Q Joe, on this matter again of the apology or explanation, when you said you did not wish to characterize it, are you saying it is a reply and not an apology?

A I merely wish to characterize this as a reply to the Soviet note.

Q Was the White House consulted on the note?

A Yes.

Q The President personally approved, can we assume?

A You may assume that the President has approved it.

Q Joe, can we ask--

A Bob [McCloskey] suggests that the fact that this is a reply be put on the record. I thought I had done that by labeling this in the beginning, by labeling this, that this was a reply.

MR. McCLOSKEY: There seems to be a little confusion.

A Perhaps these people came in a little bit late.

Q Joe, can we go over this again, that the plane was on a course well outside the Soviet territorial limit. Our version of territorial limits is three miles, theirs I believe is twelve miles, I believe, in most places. Which do we stay outside of, theirs or what?

A I just don't know the answer to that. I think we can get that for you.

Q Also whether it is three or six. You mentioned six.

A Six or twelve--

Q It is not three anymore?

A Three--six--or twelve. There are a number of them. There is no international agreement on that.

Q Joe, just for the sake of mechanics on this, when did we receive the Soviet note, so that we can figure out how quickly this reply is going out?

A The Soviet note, I think, was received here about midmorning.

Q Which? Ten o'clock or ten-thirty?

Q Ten-thirty or ten o'clock?

MR. McCLOSKEY: I think approximately ten o'clock. It had been received in the U. S. Embassy in Moscow a few hours before that.

Q Joe, for the record, do you have the language of President Eisenhower's January 25, 1961 statement?

A That is President Kennedy.

Q Statement by President Kennedy?

A The President.

Q Right. I have the wrong President.

Q This was in a news conference, I presume,

Joe?

A This is a Kennedy news conference, January 25. Let me first read the question for you. You recall this was at the time of the release of the RB-47 pilots.

"Q Mr. President, this RB-47 case"--

Do you wish to note the question?

Q No; just give us the answer.

A "Mr. President, this RB-47 case"--

Well, the answer is enough, I think:

"A The Soviet Government is fully aware of the U. S. Government views with respect to the distinction between the question of the U. S. Air Force RB-47 and the incident which occurred over Soviet territory on May 1, 1960 involving an American U-2 type aircraft. Flights of American aircraft penetrating the airspace of the Soviet Union have been suspended since May 1960. I have ordered that they not be resumed."

That is the Q and A.

Q Right.

Q Thank you very much.

[Whereupon at 2:45 p.m. the press briefing
was concluded.]

ECMoyer